

# Coal-plant plan sparks concerns

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ST. GEORGE — An energy company's plan to build a giant coal-fired power plant about 14 miles northwest of Mesquite, Nev., has some southern Utah residents concerned. The 750-megawatt coal-fired Toquop power plant would serve customers in southern Nevada and Arizona, according to Sithe Global Power, which is proposing to build the \$1.3 billion project on 640 acres of Bureau of Land Management land.

Bill Morrill, BLM's project manager for the proposal, said an environmental impact statement was produced to evaluate what impact the project would have on the site. Mesquite is about 40 miles southwest of St. George.

"In St. George, people are most concerned with air emissions from the plant," Morrill said. "They want to know what the plant would do to our air and what they can expect when it comes to air quality."

A public meeting on the project, held at the Dixie Center in St. George, happened to coincide with elections, and many of those attending seemed to wander in after casting their vote.

A Nevada lawyer for the watchdog group Western Resource Advocates said Sithe is building the plant in eastern Nevada for two reasons: "Water and the environmental effects will be in Utah."

But Morrill said the consultant hired by the BLM to analyze air quality issues is convinced the emissions will fit within federal regulatory guidelines.

"Some of the folks mentioned being 'downwinders,' but that really doesn't have anything to do with this power plant," Morrill said. "Some folks wanted to get up and talk, and we agreed to that, but it's not as good as writing your comments down for the official record."

Sithe Global Power originally sought a permit for a natural gas-powered plant but decided to switch to coal after natural gas prices began to sharply rise. The coal-fired power plant would use the best available technology to control emissions, according to the company's Web site.

If approved, construction on the power plant would begin in late 2008 and take three years to complete. Once operational, the plant would be the largest taxpayer in Lincoln County, Nev., with tax revenues estimated at more than \$10 million per year.

For more information on the project, log on to [blm.gov/eis/nv/toquop](http://blm.gov/eis/nv/toquop). Public comments will be accepted until Dec. 11.

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